

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 OPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-12 OMB-01 AID-20 PC-04 NIC-01 RSR-01 /139 W
----- 114810

R 191300 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8147

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

/

MEMBASSY MONROVIA 1809

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 0619

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SL

SUBJECT: ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS: DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT

REF FREETOWN 0597

1. IN A REPUBLICAN DAY BROADCAST THIS MORNING, PRESIDENT STEVENS ANNOUNCED THAT HE SIGNED A PROCLAMATION YESTERDAY DISSOLVING PARLIAMENT AS OF APRIL 18. DISSOLUTION CAME AS SOMEWHAT OF A SURPRISE AS PARLIAMENT HAD ADJOURNED YESTERDAY UNTIL APRIL 25.

2. STEVENS ALSO DECLARED A STATE OF EMERGENCY TO " SAFEGUARD LIFE AND PROPERTY" AND TRIED TO ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT IT WILL BE WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO LEGITIMATE ELECTION CAMPAIGNING INCLUDING THE HOLDING OF MEETINGS.

3. EARLIER THIS WEEK M. P. M. O. BASH- TAQI AND THE EDITOR OF THE SLPP PAPER THE PEOPLE, JULIUS COLE WERE DETAINED BY THE POLICE. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL WELL INFORMED SOURCES DETENTION ORDERS HAVE ALSO BEEN ISSUED FOR M. P. CYRIL FORAY AND FREETOWN
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LAWYER F. M. CAREW, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ELUDE THE POLICE UNTIL NOW.

4. A SENSITIVE SOURCE REPORTS NANCY STEELE, LEADER OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN' S CONGRESS HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER PROTECTIVE CUSTODY AT HER HOME FOLLOWING AN ATTACK ON HER RESIDENCE LAST FRIDAY. DESPITE REPORTS THAT SHE HAS TAKEN REFUGE IN GUINEA, THE EMBASSY HAS ESTABLISHED SHE DID RETURN FROM A QUICK TRIP TO CONAKRY AND IS NOW IN FREETOWN UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF THE POLICE. THE LADIES WERE ATTACKED BY APC THUGS UNDER THE CONTROL OF ALFRED AKIBO- BETTS, (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH FREETOWN MAYOR D. T. AKIBO- BETTS) WHEN THEY TRIED TO DEMONSTRATE IN FAVOR OF STEELE' S CANDIDACY FOR THE FREETOWN EAST I SEAT IN PARLIAMENT. AKIBO- BETTS HAD SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER BEEN GIVEN THE BLESSING OF V. P. S. I. KOROMA TO BE THE APC CANDIDATE FOR THE SAME SEAT. THE MOTIVATION FOR THE ATTACK APPARENTLY WAS TO INTIMIDATE STEELE AND KEEP HER FROM RUNNING AS AN INDEPENDENT AGAINST AKIBO- BETTS. A NUMBER OF WOMEN WERE SERIOUSLY INJURED IN THE ROCK AND CLUB ATTACK AND THERE ARE RUMORS THAT TWO WOMEN WERE KILLED.

5. WHEN INFORMED OF THE ATTACK KAMARA- TAYLOR, MINISTER OF FINANCE AND FRIEND OF NANCY STEELE ORDERED A POLICE DETACHMENT SENT TO HER HOME TO STOP PILFERAGE BY THE APC THUGS. IN A MEETING IN PRESIDENT STEVENS OFFICE ON APRIL 17 POLICE COMMISSIONER KOROMA WAS BERATED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR SEND ING THE POLICE TO STEELE' S HOUSE WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE PRESIDENT. WHEN THE COMMISSIONER COUNTERED THAT HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO SEND THE POLICE BY KAMARA- TAYLOR, THE PRESIDENT ORDERED THAT HENCEFORTH WHEN THE NEED FOR POLICE PROTECTION FOR ANY POLITICAL FIGURE ARISES HE SHOULD BE INFORMED IMMEDIATELY AND HE ALONE WOULD DECIDE WHETHER THE POLICE SHOULD BE DISPATCHED.

6. THE EMBASSY HAS HEARD FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT PRESIDENT STEVENS RECEIVED THE ASSURANCES OF SUPPORT HE SOUGHT FROM PRESIDENTS TOURE AND TOLBERT DURING THEIR APRIL 16 MEETING IN CONAKRY. HE NOW FEELS HE HAS CONTROL OVER THE POTENTIALS FOR MISCHIEF MAKING BY OPPOSITION FIGURES WHO CURRENTLY ARE IN MONROVIA AND CAN SUCCESSFULLY CARRY OFF THE ELECTION.

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7. WHILE THE PRESIDENT HAS STILL TO ANNOUNCE WHEN NOMINATION

DAY WILL BE HELD, THE EMBASSY EXPECTS IT TO BE SET FOR SOMETIME NEXT WEEK. THIS WOULD GIVE THE OPPOSITION ONLY THE FIVE DAY HOLIDAY WEEKEND TO LINE UP ITS CANDIDATES AND MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE APC TO MUSCLE THROUGH A NUMBER OF ITS CANDIDATES " RETURNED UNOPPOSED" ON NOMINATION DAY.

8. BOLSTERING SECURITY FORCES, THE GOSL TOOK DELIVERY OF 3 CESSNA SINGLE ENGINE, TWO SEAT AIRCRAFT OVER THE WEEKEND. THE PLANES ARE FULLY OPERATIONAL AND ARE BEING PILOTED BY SIERRA LEONEANS TRAINED IN THE SOVIET UNION. TWO OF THE CESSNA'S AND TWO OF THE RECENTLY ARRIVED HELICOPTERS OVERFLEW TODAY'S REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION.

9. COMMENT: IF THE PAST WEEKS EVENTS ARE ANY INDICATION, THE PRESIDENT WILL BE RUTHLESS IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS EMERGENCY POWERS AND THE ELECTION WILL BE A COMPLETE CHARADE. THE ATTACK ON NANCY STEELE AND HER SUPPORTERS, WHICH THE PRESIDENT APPEARS TO HAVE
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